

Other Articles

The Economic Needs of Disabled People in Jordan: From the Personal to the Political Perspective

Majid Turmusani

Abstract

This paper uses original research findings which show the severe disadvantage in the needs and opportunities of disabled people in Jordan, especially in their economic life. This article argues the need to move the debate from the personal to the political when studying disabled people's needs. The participatory methods used for investigation enabled disabled people to get involved in the research process and allowed them to move their views from the individual to the political, realising that many of their problems are grounded in society's policies and practices. These problems were mainly centred in the area of employment and state's welfare benefits as well as access and self mobility. The paper concludes that information and awareness are key elements in changing attitudes towards disabled people within the Jordanian cultural context and that participatory research can play an important role in this process.

Setting the Issue

The literature reviewed supported by the empirical findings of this research have shown that disabled people world wide as well as in Jordan are experiencing social and economic deprivation. They are a disadvantaged minority living on the margin of society not because of their physical limitation but mainly because of society attitudes and prejudice against them. Although there is a growing awareness of the substantial contribution disabled people make to the life of their societies, too often development plans bypass disabled people, ignoring their need for education, training and employment. Practical assistance could be made available for confronting these discriminatory policies and practices especially in the economic arena only when their vital needs are identified and this can best be assured by the involvement of disabled people themselves into the research process and the support of their groups.

The growing concern of government, employers and disabled people themselves with the magnitude of the economic problem disabled people encounter and, consequently, society as a whole, and the need to ensure equitable share in the benefits of social and economic development have contributed to the background for conducting this study. With the development of the social model of disability in the West during this decade and the increasing interest in disability issues in Jordan, especially after the (IYDP) 1981, the researcher felt the tremendous need to carry out this study on the economic needs of disabled people using a participatory approach based on social model of disability that allows the involvement of disabled people into the research process. Thus, the debate in this paper is based on a social model of disability that basically looks at disability as socially constructed and deals with it through restructuring the society especially the economy.

This study therefore was carried out to obtain insight into the lives and needs of disabled people in the area of their economic participation using a participatory approach called the participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) that allows their contribution into the research process. To achieve the objectives of this study, a representative sample "target group" consisting of sensory and physically impaired people (blind, deaf and physically impaired) had been selected. This included disabled people who are involved in vocational training, sheltered workshops and self employment. Another stratified comparative group who are not involved in any activities at all had also been selected. The target group which counts 181 disabled people was combined with 30 key informants drawn from three districts out of the five in the middle region of Jordan. The target group was selected to represent gender and different geographic area. More details will be available in the methodology section.

Within the course of this research disabled people acted as participant respondents to inquiries concerning general characteristics, medical history and professionals relationships, knowledge and satisfaction about services available for them and suggested improvements for the quality of their lives. Specialised information regarding the broader system of service delivery for disabled people and the available policies and legislation was obtained from key informants. Information sought on the economic needs, priorities, perception towards these needs and the way they should be addressed as well as the relevance of these needs and its impact on lives was obtained through in-depth discussions carried out in focus group sessions.

The study's findings (which is hoped to serve as a needs assessment survey) clearly demonstrates the compelling need for a change in attitudes towards disabled people and their abilities among the general public and particularly among employers, teachers, and even among disabled people themselves regarding the perception of their rights and needs. Discrimination (as it appears throughout the findings) is the key problem that pervades the lives of disabled people compounding the consequences of their disability and pushing them into the margin of no socialisation. Awareness is the solution and information is the most likely approach to overcome the basic ignorance that creates discrimination. It can be concluded that accurate information on the reality of disabled people could be obtained from a research that allows the involvement of disabled people in its process and the control of its production as this may constitute a step in their emancipation.

The Politics of the Medical Model of Disability over Attitudes, Policies and Practices Regarding Disabled People in Jordan and its Impact on Disability Research

In Jordan, the dominance of the medical model of disability (exemplified in professional practices and the Western NGOs including the UN agencies) has perpetuated negative attitudes (concepts and beliefs) and practices towards disabled people and played a role in informing policies that discriminate against them. This results in a severe disadvantage of the needs and opportunities of disabled people, especially in their economic life. Nonetheless, it should be acknowledged that such discrimination against disabled people existed in Jordan even before the work of Western disability NGOs. Such discrimination tended to be based on economic grounds, given that care of a disabled member often meant a drain on the family's resources without prospective returns in the future. This notion of discrimination against disabled people in Jordan also is believed to have been largely influenced by some Islamic teachings, not least to say by the Arab culture.

Disability in Arab culture, has traditionally been seen as something shameful, an ordeal to be endured by the family that has in its midst a disabled person. Thus, Arab families have often failed to admit that they include a disabled person, for a fear that this would be considered a disgrace which lowered the family's standing among its neighbours (Khatib, 1989), especially when the disabled member is a female (Coleredge, 1993). Feelings of guilt and pity may exist and some parents consequently kept their disabled kids hidden away, which denies them the opportunities to acquire the available services necessary for their integration. On the other hand, some people feel that disability is a divine tribulation visited upon the family to test their belief in God and believe that they have to accept such misfortune with faith and forbearance (Miles, 1995; Barnes, 1996; DAA, 1995). The Arab societies, including Jordan, treated the category of disabled people as a negligible quantity, and the community systems directly or indirectly reinforced this tendency, treating disabled people as though it was the end of the road for them. Any investment in their favour was considered to be a burden on the state (Khatib, 1989).

Hence, it is believed that Islamic teaching (Qur'an and Hadith) have emphasised some notion of discrimination against disabled people such as the stigma of sins which is associated with those of impairment (Ali, 1994: AlBaqra, verse 17-20, 282; An-Nahl, V. 75-76; Al-Fatr, V. 19-22; Yasin, V. 65-67; Bani Isra'el, V. 97; Khan, 1979, VII 374, 376-377), amputation issues (Ali, 1994: Al Mumtahinah, v 12 and AlMa'dih, v 33, 41), female treatment in Islam in general (Habibi, 1998 and Ingstad, 1995), and the perception of their intelligence deficiency in particular (Khan, 1979, VII, P:21-22, 80-81,

95-98) etc. This has played a role in enhancing negative attitudes towards disabled people and their abilities and resulted in their being segregated and discriminated against, on the grounds of their physical impairments.

Therefore, it can be said that in spite of the overall positive reference to disabled people in Qur'an and Hadith, there has been some instances where disability was referred to in the negative sense and bluntly in a non metaphoric way. There are several verses from Qur'an which are believed to have carried negative attitudes and meaning towards people with disabilities. The quotation of these verses largely drawn from (Ali, 1994) in his translation to the meaning of the Qur'an as follows: Surah Al Nahl verse 75-76 refers to disabled people as useless with no power over anything and being burden on their superiors and that very often wrong doing results from their behavior. Surah Yasin verse 65-67 refers to disability as a punishment from God for those who do wrong. This had indeed led to the stigma of sin being associated with those with impairments and had had very serious negative implications on disabled people lives. Nevertheless, there are some accommodating statements towards disabled people mentioned in Qur'an, but they still adhere to a paternalistic view. Surah Al Nur verse 61 indicates that there is no harm if blind, lame or sick persons eat together with able-bodied people.

Mohammed's teachings (Hadith) also reveal several stories where negative attitudes towards disabled people were obvious (Khan, 1979, VII, in his translation of Sahih Al Bukhari). Disability has been mentioned by the prophet as a result of evil eye (Ibid., 1979, VII, P:426). Disability was also mentioned as a defect given by God for those who sin (Ibid., VII:374; 376-377). Mohammed also taught his companions to run away from a leper as they run from a lion (Ibid., VII: 409).

Evidence from the empirical findings of this research show that the cultural representation of disabled people in Jordan tend to portray a negative image towards them. This can be seen by the illustrated proverbs which are largely influenced by Islamic teachings (see Turmusani, 1998).

When asked about their needs, those disabled people who were interviewed identified a positive change in attitudes of family, friends and employers as one of their major needs. Many of them placed this need into their first five priorities. However, those interviewed have complained of certain negative attitudes towards them and their abilities which are illustrated by cultural proverbs. They made general reference to the common proverb which says that those with impairments are cruel in nature and deserve what had happened to them (i.e. Kulu Tho A'ah Jabar; or Elie Ebtalah Ma Kafah), the reference here being that some one with impairment should not need to rise above their status as an impaired person in society. It can be concluded therefore, on the basis of the evidence put forward, that these illustrated proverbs may have greatly influenced the beliefs towards causes and explanations of impairments and shaped the negative attitudes of the general public towards disabled people in Jordan.

Some Islamic teachings moreover, may be considered to be a hindrance to disabled people, especially with regard to such people being referred to as those who do not see or understand, when equating them with those who do wrong and those wicked in the society. Referring to those with impairments in such a way may have helped disability be associated with wickedness and evil and therefore inferring deviance and stigma. Disabled people interviewed were also unhappy with some proverbs that seem accommodating, but which in fact hold charitable and paternalistic attitudes such as La Tidhak Aleh, Rabna Bibtalik Zayoh. This means, do not laugh at an impaired person for you might be tested by God just the same as he.

One key informant explained to me that one factor that helped to segregate disabled people was the Islamic teaching illustrated by the Prophet who ordered people to run away from those who suffer from leprosy (Ibid., VII:409). The same key informant also made reference to the fact that blind people were until recently able to get some income from reciting Qur'an, but as the society has moved forward and people became able to listen to Qur'an through the media and other means, blind people have lost this privilege.

Islam has also brought the notion that disability is the will of Allah and that it should not be

changed unless in certain circumstances. This resulted in serious hindrance to the use of medical achievement to cure some impairments (see Miles, 1995). The practice of amputations of the hands of those commit a crime of theft (in Islamic law) until recently not only deliberately added to the number of disabled people, but also strengthened the stigma associated with physical disability (DAA, 1995). The stigma of amputation has, moreover, had an especially negative effect by making amputation surgery particularly distasteful and, therefore, may have inhibited some people seeking medical surgery for certain diseases.

On the other hand, it is argued that disabled adults in Islamic society may have a more secure situation than in some other societies. This is due to the fact that Islamic traditions pay much attention to providing care for elderly people (Miles, 1995). Too much emphasis being placed on providing care and too much respect being paid to the elderly in Islam, might hinder the personal development of other sections of society such as the youth who are unlikely to have equal opportunity in life because the elderly still dominate and monopolise positions of responsibility in society. It is also believed that the general focus on the community and its primary interests might also hinder the personal development of individuals.

The situation of disabled women within a context where women still considered to be *Awra*, which means that women's faces and bodies must not be exposed to public view) would seem particularly difficult. Women in general are not allowed freedom in choosing a husband, in expressing an opinion or living independently. Disabled women, especially those who are mentally retarded, are seen as an endless burden on their families, not only morally, but also financially, since most of them do not marry. For those reasons, it can be said that the attitudes towards disabled women are unfavourable when compared to that towards disabled men. A disabled female frequently becomes the centre of concern for the whole family, not for her own sake and benefits, but for the protection of the family honour.

Although the treatment of disabled people has changed considerably over time in regard to providing care and rehabilitation, those who are most neglected are disabled girls in rural areas, especially in Muslim countries (Ingstad, 1995). In southern Lebanon for instance, it has been reported that a female was left to die at her half-destroyed house, after an Israeli military offensive on her village. The father told the reporters that he preferred to save their cow rather than his daughter because it was more useful to them (Habib, 1997, DAA, 1997).

However, Western values have also influenced local beliefs in Jordan; namely, those values underlying the Western NGOs method of work including practices related to professional control and the assumed passivity of disabled people, both of which are compatible with the medical model of disability. The voluntarism vs. government sponsorship of services for disabled people is an additional legacy that comes from Western influence on Jordan. The provision of comprehensively funded services for disabled people has encouraged reliance on these NGOs and therefore discouraged the development of formal state operated and funded services. This has led to marginalising disabled people in institutions rather than integrating them into society. As a result officials who are involved in disability issues have believed that disabled people should be collected into one place where they can receive appropriate care. But, this policy of institutionalisation has caused the issue of disability to be low on government's list of priorities, and has had serious negative consequences regarding the location of disabled people on the welfare state agenda (Turmusani, 1998).

The medical model as well as the Islamic teaching have influenced the development of disability research in Jordan. The medical model, focused on professional power and client passivity, has inhibited the development of any research that aims at the involvement and participation of disabled people. Islamic teachings have also played a part in the lack of development of any action research given that it adopted a different method to deal with disability issues. Hiding social problems from sight, including disability, is the most popular method known through Islamic teachings. Moreover, the focus on the community as a whole in Islamic society rather than on the individual has delayed the development of a methodology that focuses on individual problems.

In conclusion, while the medical model of disability which underlies the method of work of Western NGOs and UN programmes in Jordan, as well as the some Islamic teachings, have made very important contributions to the care, training and opening up of new opportunities for disabled people, these programmes and teachings have contributed to the perpetuation of the difficulties which disabled people face in Jordan. Therefore, society has become hostile to meeting disabled people's needs, especially the economic ones, or as Abberely (1987) pointed out, when the disability is perceived as a personal individual problem, the society then will deny the responsibility for providing care.

The Participatory Method Used for Researching the Economic Needs of Disabled People in this Research

There are different approaches concerning disability research methods; however, recent debate has centred around two methods which are the participatory and the emancipatory paradigm both of which try to involve disabled people in the research process and give them more power over research production. They adopt different approaches in trying to achieve a level of participation and the control for disabled people within the context of the research process. In discussing prevalent perspectives on disability research methods, it is important to make a brief reference to some issues related to the particular methodology used in this research and the logic which underlies it. This is to give a better understanding of the method used for investigation in this study and how its transformative power had helped disabled people to move their debate from the personal to the political.

Until recently, under the dominant traditional research methodology in Jordan, disabled people have been treated as passive research objects with no control over research process and its production. This has been especially true with survey methods. As a result their real needs, especially the economic needs have been neither identified nor properly met. It may therefore, be important to use an approach based on an alternative participatory of research model for studying disabled people's economic needs and rights. Here the role of researcher is changed from that of controller to facilitator by putting their expertise (i.e., professional research skills) at the disposal of disabled people.

From the outset it should be pointed out that debate on disability research based on the social model has become the most distinct feature of disability discourse in the recent days. Not only is it for debating a set of ideas and proving a personal view, but it is to realise how the world of ideas can contribute to the change in the world of reality regarding disability issues. Disabled people in the social view, therefore, are considered to be the corner stone in bringing change that improves their lives. The focus of this empirical research is on the extent which social research (participatory) can stimulate the emancipation of disabled people through a process whereby disabled people can move their views from the personal to the political.

Thus, research, including disability research, can play an important role in attempting to transform and change the world not only in describing it. In this sense, Barnes and Mercer (1997) argue that research is inherently political and should be guided by emancipatory aims such that disadvantaged groups, including disabled people, are likely to be concerned with what changes the research can bring about for them (Ramcharan and Grant, 1995). Although some existing research could occasionally be said to have transformative potential, it is clearly not emancipatory in terms of two primary principles of empowerment and reciprocity which are essential for any research with transformative potential (Zarb, 1992).

This paper concerns the extent to which a particular research method - called the participatory rapid appraisal (PRA)¹ - plays by increasing the level of who is controlling the research process and its production. It will be argued that disability research (emancipatory or participatory) may facilitate some transfer of power (i.e. facilitate the empowerment) in favour of disabled people when studying their needs. However, it should be pointed out that emancipatory research that involves academic work cannot be achieved by academics alone. Such a method fails to address the academic's control of the research process. Although the suggested PRA method which has been used in this research may not be the best to use when studying disabled people's economic needs with regard to transferring the

power to them (since it is not specifically a disability methodology), it is of a considerable value to third world researchers and may offer hope in achieving real emancipatory research in the academic areas. This is due to the fact that it permits high level of involvement of disabled people in the research process through discussion.

The analysis of the literature used in this study with regard to researching disability in developing countries shows a tendency to support the use of a participatory approach (Helander, 1993). This may be explained due to the early stages of development in these developing countries, especially with regard to the achievement of democracy and the respect of human rights, as well as the dominance of the traditional approaches dealing with disability issues especially the medical model. Having a situation where human rights are not fully respected and people are not allowed freedom to express their views and opinions, it is not expected, in such circumstances, to find a widespread support of the emancipatory approach to deal with people's needs and problems. Most of the literature on disability in developed countries tends to support the emancipatory approach when studying disabled people as a means for furthering their empowerment (Oliver, 1996; Morris, 1992; Zarb, 1992).

However, there is a serious weakness in the emancipatory approach because the academic maintains control in a manner previously discussed. Moreover, the limitations of this approach is that researching disabled people, according to the emancipatory approach, seems hardly practical as disabled people sometimes are denied any opportunity to take part in the research and researchers are often not willing to make their research accessible to them (Zarb, 1992; Oliver and Barnes, 1997). In conclusion, Morris (1992) summarises the debate about developing a methodology of disability research to empower disabled people by suggesting four elements which must be present before any research could be included in this category. (1) The research should play a role in personal liberation. (2) The personal experience of disability should be revealed clearly. (3) Non-disabled researchers must present themselves as allies and resources. (4) Disability research and disability politics are of general relevance to all social groups.

From the Personal to the Political Perspective on Disability

In simple terms this means how the individual experience in life is translated into political actions. Throughout the process of research the awareness of those who took part in the discussion of their own condition as individual is moved to the of social structure that constrains their development and consequently perpetuate their passivity and inhibit their emancipation. Although the medical understanding of disability dominated and influenced those who made up the sample us in this research, the collective response of those who made up the focus group sessions has shown the political perspective and the way they viewed their needs and rights.

Respondents, generally speaking had internalised a personal view of themselves as people who have a problem due to functional limitations when being not able to perform certain activities. They look up to existing services with great gratitude and many of them favoured the residential institutional life due to the difficulties they encounter outside the institutions.² However, there has been noticed a personal development for those individuals who took part in the focus group. They sometimes got involved in the discussion and moved their views from the personal to the society and from the charity to the rights perspective.

The many different economic needs identified by disabled people within the course of this research made the researcher, in consultation with disabled people, classify these needs into two categories. First, the primary economic needs which include those needs that directly related to the financial independence of disabled people and includes the need for different kinds of employment as well as the need for welfare benefits from the state. Second, the secondary economic needs which are important for everyday life and yielding to the primary economic needs. This includes needs such as accessibility in the built environment including housing and transportation, advocacy and NGOs, a positive change in attitudes, education and information, establishing their own family, sign language, legisla-

tion, medical care, and training.

Having little access to government and private employment was one of the main reasons for many disabled people to opt out of self employment. Although over a third of disabled people placed these needs into their first priorities, the majority of them said employment needs are not met at all. Less than half of disabled people perceived the meeting of these employment needs as a right. The need for welfare assistance from the state was identified by few people, but also the meeting of these needs was perceived as a charity. It can be suggested that the absence of welfare system for disabled people might have influenced them in not identifying the need for welfare benefits from the state.

The primary economic needs have been identified by those with different kinds of disabilities based on their particular circumstances. Blind people for instance, identified only the need for self employment and government employment as well as identifying the welfare benefits (financial assistance) from the state. The co-operative projects, sheltered employment and private employment were not identified to be their primary economic needs. On the other hand, those with physical disabilities identified both sets of needs, but excluded the need for private employment and exemption. Whilst deaf people excluded the need for government employment as well as the need for exemption. It should be noted that both blind and physically disabled people did not identify private employment because of the unsuccessful experience they had while working in private employment and therefore they preferred other employers such as government and self employment. Deaf people identified private employment because of their failure in other employment schemes such as self employment and government employment. On the other hand, females who were deaf as well as those with physical disability generally preferred sheltered employment or having their own businesses. This is due to restricted attitudes on women's mobility. Blind females, however, preferred government employment, especially when they possessed high qualifications.

It should be noted that the meeting of the need for private employment was perceived by a larger number of disabled people in the sample as a charity subject, whereas the meeting of the need for self employment was perceived by majority as a right.

Relevance and Contentment

As it is in many places in the world, the economic needs of disabled people in Jordan remained unmet in spite of its importance to their lives. None of the disabled people in our research reported that their need is properly met. It can be concluded that disabled people were not satisfied by the existing services available to them. Many disabled people complained that employment, especially government employment, was not provided at all. This is in spite of having high level of qualification sometimes.

Over a third of the total sample of disabled people emphasised the relevance of these identified needs to their lives because they have perpetuated their financial dependency on others. Males, more than females, identified this need. This might be due to that females are expected and encouraged to be dependent on other members of the family in the male dominated Jordanian society. Other identified areas of relevance included limitations on future plans for establishing their own family, especially for males; hardship and restriction on providing necessity in their own family; restriction on social mobility, especially for those who were females; and difficulties in adjustment to the disability condition when it occurs.

Addressing the Economic Needs of Disabled People

Nearly half of total disabled people wanted their needs to be given same value as other people's needs. It was viewed as a matter of right not charity and consequently to be given priority in society's agenda. However, some of those questioned suggested the involvement of disabled people in the process of identification prioritising and decision making, but only a few of them, mainly those with physical disabilities, who attended the comparative group suggested that disabled people should be left alone to identify their own needs. In contrast, the other half of disabled people in our research

sounded happy with government departments identifying their needs (mainly by those attending the vocational training and sheltered employment). And a majority of disabled people thought of both disabled people's NGOs and government departments would form a better opinion in assessing their needs.

Problems Encountered and the Impact on Lives

The lower income that disabled people have makes it difficult for them not only to maintain same level of living as other people, but to meet their basic needs. The high unemployment rate among disabled people contributed to their misfortune and makes it harder for them to meet their financial needs. Ultimately, this increases the number of disabled people who are poor and strengthens the link between poverty and disability. In our research, problems that were caused due to the failure of meeting the economic needs of disabled people are explained mainly by males to be related to a limited source of income. In ability to access other services in the community and difficulties to find support from family were reported by mainly those females questioned. More than half of disabled people in our sample had problems related to level of income and the majority of those had no income at all.

The impact of these problems on disabled people's lives was mainly due to continual financial dependency on others for many of them as well as spoiling relation with friends and family. Sometimes these problems create feelings of inferiority for some of them. However, the majority of those married, especially who made up the comparative group as well as those at the self employment schemes, attributed these problems to causing a hardship in their own family. The main impact of disabled people's problems in this research appeared to be their financial dependency on others and its consequences on the social life. Having a source of income would help in achieving their personal autonomy and social integration.

Conclusion - Towards Participatory Policy Agenda

The last two decades has seen intensive expansion in the services provided for disabled people as well as the debate over this issue. With the influence of (IYDP) 1981 on disability issues in many parts of the world and the development of policies to deal with disabled people's needs, it is becoming impossible to ignore the existence of this group in the Jordanian society, especially when the debate on disability issues is moving to a political perspective. Consequently, their needs are expected to be on the increase and that would panic policy makers and service providers. The findings of a participatory research might be useful to inform policy agenda for future planning targeting the economic participation of disabled people.

As mentioned earlier, this research is based on the social model of disability that views disability as a result of social neglect, oppression and discrimination faced by disabled people in their everyday activities, especially in the economic life. This is due mainly to the disabling environment and not because of the lack of abilities. Through a participatory method used, this research has attempted to move disabled people from viewing disability as individual problem to that of a society-wide problem and from the personal to the political. Consequently, this involvement of disabled people into the research process would stimulate their emancipation and get them empowered. Empowerment here means a process whereby disabled people are allowed to explore the extent of their potential and overcome their limitations set by the negative attitudes of society. Therefore, it would seem appropriate for a participatory policy agenda targeting disability issues to consider the environment as the focal point of action. The policy agenda in this context means that which is based on the principle that disabled people have full rights including economic rights as other members of society and should not be discriminated against because of their disability. This rights based approach also affirms the duties and obligations of being equal citizens in taking part in society building, especially the economy, and reject viewing disabled people as a subject of charity in any way. In this policy approach, the rights of disabled people should be guaranteed by the power of the law including the enforcement of a comprehensive welfare system provided by all sectors.

Disability concerns should also be incorporated into the macro, socio-economic planning process to ensure that disabled people's rights are taken into account and that they have the opportunity to benefit from the outcome of development rather than being marginalised. The ultimate goal for such policy is to ensure that disabled people are in control of their lives and their potential is developed to an optimum level that reaches to the independence. One important issue which must be addressed within this participatory policy is the redefinition of the role of researcher or whoever involved in defining and meeting their needs (especially the economic ones) including the professionals. The suggested role is that which looks at professionals and researchers as not experts, but resources and facilitators working alongside disabled people. Disabled people have to have a central role in the process of their economic rehabilitation including the identification of the needs, planning the programme and its evaluation.

Therefore, the following suggested set of policy recommendations could be helpful in improving the economic participation of disabled people and the quality of their lives as well as lessen their dependency. As the financial independence was identified to be their prime concern, having a source of income that comes from the employment would be a key solution. Those who can not cope with the demand of the competitive job market should be entitled to another kind of employment such as sheltered employment as well as funding for self employment. Vocational training that addresses the needs of the market as well as disabled people is essential to equip them for work. Promoting the working abilities of disabled people among private and government employers as well as supporting the efforts made towards encouraging employment opportunities at large are also useful means. Information that aims at changing the negative attitudes towards the abilities of disabled people through awareness and research can be essential for fulfilling the previous recommendation. The welfare benefits from the state should also be provided to disabled people by the power of the law. Built environment including access and mobility as well as services of medical care, education and rehabilitation can also be contributing factors in their well-being. To avoid conflict resulting from poor co-ordination and co-operation among all parties involved in the disability business in Jordan, policies on services provided for disabled people should be consistent in terms of the kind of services, the location and their beneficiaries.

Notes

1. The participatory approach has also been favoured for investigation in this research. A participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) was employed to get insight into the lives of disabled people. It is simply a comprehensive, practical and quick method which enables people to identify, analyse and evaluate their own situations and generate solutions to certain problems. In our case it involves disabled people as participants respondents in the process of researching and identifying their economic needs. It provides opportunities to learn from and with local community members in order to understand the complexities of a certain topic in a further explored manner to the topic, as well as helping to discover other related topics (Thies, 1991; Chambers, 1994). The focus of PRA is to gather relevant satisfactory and accurate data on a topic which will help to understand the problem and can be used, especially for further decisions (Turmusani, 1993). PRA revolves around qualitative data collection. At the same time it can be seen as a complementary to other methodologies such as conventional sample surveys and ethnographic research (Melville, 1993; Scrimshaw et al 1987). However, PRA in many cases can be substitute for other methodologies, as it does identify a problem in general. Thus for further detail on a certain point of the findings a further qualitative study may be required, especially when quantitative data needed as in a demographic census or sophisticated statistical analysis is required. PRA cannot replace formal survey techniques (Melville, 1993; Thies, 1991; Pratt & Loizos, 1992). The choice of method always depends on the kind of information required and the resources available. But, if the main objective is to get insight and to learn about the community opinions, attitudes and beliefs then PRA may be the best choice.

2. One of the most obvious findings in this study was the extent of social isolation among dis-

abled people and the level of their dependency. There was a link between the degree of social isolation and the level of financial independency with very few of disabled people in our study had access to income from a job or other sources (former source of income or additional one). The majority of them were dependent heavily on their families for their main source of income. Another striking findings in this research is the high level of dissatisfaction expressed by disabled people towards their economic involvement. The lack of or the absence of income as well as the limited opportunities and its insecurity were the most reasons reported for disabled people unhappiness.

References

- Abberely, P.(1987) The Concept of Oppression and the Development of a Social Theory of Disability. *Disability and Society*. Vol. 2 No.1, 1987, P:19-55.
- Ali, A.Y. (transl) (1991) *The Meaning of The Holy Qur'an*. Ammana Corporation, Brentwood, Maryland, USA.
- Barnes and Mercer (1997) Breaking the moulds? An introduction to doing disability research. In Barnes and Mercer (ed) *Doing disability research*. Disability Research Press.
- Barnes, C. and Mercer, G. (1995) Disability: Emancipation, Community Participation and Disabled People, P: 33-45. In Mercer, and Barnes (ed), *Community empowerment: A readership in participation and development*. Save the Children Fund.
- Barnes C. (1996) Theories of Disability and the Origin of Oppression of Disabled People in Western Society. In L. Barton (ed) *Disability and Society: emerging issues and insights*. Addison Wesley Longman Limited, Essex.
- Chambers, R. (1994(b) Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): Analysis of experience. *World Development*, Vol. 22. No. 9, 1994.
- Coleredge, P. (1993) *Disability, Liberation and Development*. Oxfam publication. London.
- DAA/UNESCO (1995) *Overcoming Obstacles to the Integrating of Disabled People*. Copenhagen. Denmark.
- Habib, L. (1997) *Gender and Disability: women's experience in the Middle East*. Oxfam Uk and Ireland.
- Helander, E. (1993) *Prejudice and Dignity: An introduction to community based rehabilitation*. UNDP. New York.
- Ingstad, B.; Whyte, S. (1995) *Disability and Culture*. University of California Press. New York.
- Khan, M. M. (1979) *The translation of the meaning of the Sahih Al Bukhari: Arabic-English*, Vol VII. Chicago, ILL. Kazi, 1979.
- Khatib, A. (1989) *Disability Situation in Jordan*. The Economic Social and Cultural Committee for Western Asia (ESCWA). Amman Jordan.
- Melville, B. (1993) Rapid Rural Appraisal: its role in health planning in developing countries. *Tropical Doctor*, 1993, 23, 55-58.
- Miles, M. (1995) Disability in an Eastern Religious Context: historical perspectives. *Disability & Society*, Vol, 10, No, 1, 1995, P:49-68.
- Morris, J. (1992) Personal and Political: a feminist perspective on researching physical disability. *Disability, Handicap and Society*. Vol. 7 No 2, P:92.
- Oliver, M. (1996) Defining and Researching Disability: challenges and responses. *Exploring the Divide: Illness and Disability*. Disability Press. University of Leeds.
- Olivier, M. and Barnes, C. (1997) All we are saying is give disabled researcher a chance. *Disability and Society*, Vol. 12, No. 5, 1997 P:811-813.
- Pratt, P.; Loizos, P. (1992) *Choosing Research Methods*. Oxfam publication, London.
- Rachman, P. and Grant, G. (1994) Setting One Agenda for Empowering Persons with Disadvantages within the Research Process. In Rioux, M. and Bach, M. (ed) *Disability is Not Measles*. L'Institute Roether Institute, Ontario.
- Scrimshaw, Susan M. & Hurtado, Elena.(1987) *Rapid Assessment Procedures for Nutrition and*

Primary Health Care. UCLA.

Thies, J.; Gready, H. (1991) *Participatory Rapid Appraisal for Community Development: A Training Manual Based on Experience in Middle East and North Africa*. IIED. London.

Turmusani, M. (1993) AIntegrated Rural Development: Economic Model.@ Working paper presented in Jordanian Corporative Institute Conference. Amman, Jordan.

Turmusani, M. (1998) ASome cultural representation of disability in Jordan: concepts and beliefs towards disability within Islamic culture.@ Working paper presented in the Expert Meeting on disability in different cultures, Bonn 21-24, 1998.

Zarb, G. (1992) On the Road to Damascus: first step towards changing the relation of disability research production. *Disability, Handicap and Society*. Vol. 7, No 2, 1992.

Majid Turmusani is a final year Ph.D. student at the Disability Research Unit/Leeds, LS2 9JT UK; Email: SPLMMMT@LEEDS.AC.UK.